

Claims

1. A method of operating a filter assembly comprising:
providing a filter assembly having a portion of a filter element
comprising an elongate porous tube exposed to a fluid to be filtered;
5 drawing fluid through the filter element, thereby permitting the filter
element to become at least particularly clogged with particles in the fluid;
periodically exposing a further portion of the filter element surface;
and
drawing further fluid through the filter element.

10 2. A method according to Claim 1 wherein exposing a portion of the filter
element comprises incrementally advancing the filter element into the fluid
to be filtered.

3. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the filter element is
substantially cylindrical.

15 4. A method according to Claim 1 wherein the filter element is advanced
by means of a relatively rotatable threaded shaft or screw and nut member,
one of the screw or shaft being arranged to be rotated by drive means.

20 5. A method according to Claim 1 further comprising renewing the filter
element after exposure of the whole of a defined working surface of the
element.

6. A method according to Claim 1 further comprising periodically back-
flushing the filter element.

25 7. A filter assembly comprising a filter element comprising an elongate
porous tube having a portion arranged to be exposed to a fluid to be filtered
and means for incrementally exposing a further portion of the filter element
as the filter element becomes clogged.

8. Apparatus according to Claim 7 including pump means for drawing fluid through the filter element.

9. Apparatus according to Claim 8 wherein a single drive means is arranged to operate the pump means to draw fluid through the filter element and to advance the filter element to expose further portions of the surface.

10. Apparatus according to Claim 9 wherein the assembly includes coupling means arranged to couple a rotary drive to the pump means to draw fluid through the filter element when rotation is applied in a first direction and to advance the filter element when rotation is applied in the opposite direction.

11. Apparatus according to Claim 8 wherein the pump means is arranged to pump fluid back through the filter element to effect back-flushing of the filter element.

12. Apparatus according to Claim 7 wherein the filter assembly is removably coupled to a drive means so that the filter assembly may be renewed without having to renew the drive means.

13. Apparatus according to Claim 7 wherein the filter element comprises a substantially cylindrical tube.

14. Apparatus according to Claim 7 wherein the filter element is advanced by means of a relatively rotatable threaded shaft or screw and nut member, one of the screw or shaft being arranged to be rotated by drive means.

15. Apparatus substantially as herein described or as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

16. A method of operating a filter substantially as herein described.

098674-05101
T.07.09.00 04/09/00